

# Preface

THE purpose of this book is to acquaint the reader with Big-Power rivalry in Iran between 1918 and 1948. While there are many valuable studies that deal exhaustively with the diplomatic history of Iran up to 1918, the literature dealing with the subsequent period is much less abundant. To the author's knowledge, there is no single book devoted exclusively to the study of modern political developments in Iran. Works that have appeared since 1920 are mostly of a general descriptive character and deal with such diverse aspects as Iranian geography, climate, people, culture, and economics. They seldom devote more than one or two chapters to international relations.

These thirty years between 1918 and 1948 constitute a very stormy period and are characterized by two outstanding features that make them unique in Iran's long history. One is the emergence of Reza Khan, who on becoming absolute ruler of Iran adopted radical measures to Westernize his country. The other is the clash of the Big Powers for influence. And while this rivalry is not a new phenomenon in itself, its character is new because it is colored by profound ideological differences.

In this study the author's intention has been to concentrate on political matters, with special stress on the external relations of Iran with foreign powers. Thus internal developments are treated only

insofar as they have bearing upon international relations.

The conflict between Soviet Russia and the West is the essence of this study. The author has attempted to describe and analyze, on the one hand, the program and techniques of Soviet expansion, which constitute a novelty in the traditional pattern of diplomacy, and, on the other, the methods employed by the West to counteract this expansion.